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Prologue OBJ

Little Steven had just woken up from a brief nap and was trying to climb out of his crib, while Greg was warming him a bottle of milk. Suddenly Greg heard a crash. Running to see what happened, only to find that Steven had climbed out of his crib and hit his head on the floor. He was bleeding, and crying far louder than any baby he had ever met, so much so it almost pushed him back. Lastly, the entire room was engulfed in a bright pink light emanating from his entire body. The wound began rapidly closing, but as this was clearly gem stuff, he went to called Pearl at the temple, having to take a few paces to get out of some field of electric interference that was messing with his phone. The gems arrived swiftly and, saw what was happening.

Garnet lifted Pearl up by the neck. "Go back to the temple. When I'm done here, you have some explaining to do." She tossed Pearl to the ground, who hurried off. "Amethyst, you watch the shore, and let us know if you see anything coming in from space." Amethyst left to start her watch. Garnet then picked up Steven and turned to Greg. "I'm sorry Greg, but your going to lose Steven."

"If I'm going to lose Steven, I'm going to be with him to the end!" Greg shouted back.

"That will only lead to more death. I'm sorry Greg but there is no other way." Garnet left before he could respond.

Garnet set Steven down before unfusing.

"I'm sorry! I wish I could have told you sooner, but Rose ordered me that nobody could know!" Pearl explained. Ruby took to yelling at Pearl while Sapphire stormed outside. No consensus had been reached when Sapphire and Amethyst walked in.

"The Diamonds. They're here." Sapphire said.

"Our best bet is to get as many gems as we can. Rose said she

bubbled Bismuth because she betrayed her, but I doubt she won't help us fight of the Diamonds." Pearl materialized a mirror from her gem. "If we heal her, the Lapis in this mirror might help us." Before Sapphire could say anything, Pearl had warped off, only to return shortly with the healed gem in her hands.

"Pearl that won't help. Our best option is to use Steven as a bargaining chip to force a deal for the safety of us and the Earth." Sapphire said. Pearl was reluctant, but she had sworn to Rose to protect Steven and the Earth, and right now that meant giving him up.

The Diamonds descended from their ships. "We know Pink is here, give her to us!" Blue called out.

"This is ridiculous! We know Pink was shattered" Yellow said, quite irate.

"Yellow Diamond! Blue Diamond! We have Pink Diamond, and will give her to you for our safety and that of the Earth!" Pearl called out.

"Forfeit Rose Quartz as well and we will let you live." Yellow responded.

"That's going to be a problem."

Yellow flew down and stood in Pearl's face. "Why not? Tell me!"

"Rose Quartz never existed. It was just Pink Diamond shapeshifting. She rotated her gem to look like a Rose Quartz." Pearl explained.

"Then let her come up and show for herself." Yellow retorted.

"That's also going to be a problem. She gave up her life to create a half-organic child. Her kid, Steven, he isn't old enough to walk and talk, let alone shape-shift. I don't know how he was able to use her aura." Pearl held up Steven to show her.

"Very well. You all will be allowed to live, and the child will be able to decide the fate of the Earth, but you and the other rebels will be bubbled. The amethyst is the only one who will be allowed to

properly rejoin Homeworld, as she is the only one guilty of no crime." Yellow decided.

Pearl began to panic, knowing Homeworld hadn't the slightest clue as to how to raise a human child. "I'm not guilty of any crimes. Sure I revolted, but it was under orders of my Diamond, so I was simply doing my duty." Yellow pondered this for a second. "Additionally, my knowledge on raising human children will prove invaluable to taking care of Steven's human needs."

"Fine, but if Pink so much as disobeys a single order it's your gem on the line."

. . .

That was a lie. It wasn't ment as one, but after a short fiasco involving Pearl getting poofed, nobody feeding Steven for a day, and a ***VERY CRANKY*** half Diamond, it was decided that Pearl was absolutely necessary.

Homeworld wanted desperately to keep Steven's 'condition' of being half-human under wraps, and Steven and Pearl found that left them with a lot of bargaining power. Pearl was able to get the diamonds to allow for occasional trips outside of his room, and even to get to see Ruby and Sapphire every year on his birthday. When he was around 4 was when Pearl first leveraged this, amongst many other arguments, to get the Diamond to go get some books from the Earth for Steven.

. . .

"Look alive Lapis, Gem Ship inbound!" Bismuth called. Lapis came running.

"Should we attack?" Lapis asked.

"No, lets see what it's here for first, then ambush." said Bismuth, heading for the warp pad.

"Right" called Lapis, flying to keep up.

They observed the gems, a squadron of Rubies, as they stole...

books? Bismuth and Lapis were confused to say the least. The Rubies seemed to spot them, but didn't move to attack. Bismuth decided to leave them alone so long as they didn't attack or hurt anyone. And they weren't. That was, until one human family tried to protect their books. The adults were captured swiftly, and Bismuth and Lapis weren't fast enough to stop the Rubies, but they did hear them mention that 'Pink Diamond would probably like more humans for the zoo anyways' before leaving the atmosphere. That settled it. There wasn't a doubt in Bismuth's mind, they lost the war; she was all that was left. Walking up to check for survivors, they found one human baby in a crib. Inscribed above the little girl's head was her name 'Connie Mahashwaren.' They took her back to the temple. Bismuth decided to build a house outside the temple door for the human, as it seemed they would be taking care of it. Thankfully Lapis had been able to figure out the human communication device, and imputed the code that was left on some form of sticky backed note next to the temple door labeled 'Greg: for the baby' Bismuth inferred Garnet left it, as no one else could have known they would be taking in a kid.

. . .

The Diamond Chime, Steven was getting a call. Picking up his communicator, he saw it was from Yellow.

"Hello Yellow."

"Pink, it has been 18 years, sans 3 weeks, since this 'birth' of yours. Your Pearl informs me that you should be nearing mental and physical maturity, and I trust in your mental maturity since you have read almost every record from the last Eon or so; yet your abilities have yet to resurface, and as such, we decided to start a combat training regiment between you and Amethyst Facet 5 cut-8XM, despite her status as an off-color. Of corse, your Pearl will be their to assist you when needed. Blue and I hope it will help to bring out your powers, apart from your bubble, since you seemingly mastered that."

Steven arrived at the Prime Sky Arena right on schedule. Even if on somewhat bitter of circumstances, he was exited, as he seldom saw Amethyst. At first it was easy, but slowly and surely he wore

down, his finite stamina no match for her near limitless supply. Pearl stepped in after a while to help, so Amethyst ramped up the difficulty. Amethyst was about to land a spin-dash attack, when he went pink. He had tapped into this power a few times before, particularly his 'incident' with White, but this was the first time he tapped into it willingly. He still had full control, which ment none of the powers relegated to his gem half were coming out, but he still was faster and stronger like this. He dodged out of the way with ease, and saw a laser blast from Pearl's spear about to hit Amethyst. He wasn't worried at first, but that changed when he saw that Amethyst's gem was about to get hit. He lunged in to save her, and pulled out a shield, brandishing a emblem that he recognized, the shield of Rose Quartz. The ensuing scilence was broken by Steven. "So if I summoned this shield... And this shield belongs to Rose Quartz... does that mean that my mom was..." Pearl nodded her head. "So does that mean that I'm not Pink's son? Or was Rose Quartz also Pink Diamond?"

"They were the same person." Pearl said, a bit nervous.

Steven wasn't sure how to react, so he pushed it aside and bottled it up. "We should let the Diamonds know I can summon my shield. Maybe they will get off my case."

They left to alert the Diamonds, and Amethyst left to resume regular duties.

"That's wonderful Pink! We should do more training like this! In fact, this might be a great way to get Homeworld used to your new look. We will do a trial run with Jasper tomorrow, she will be told not to inform anyone else. Be ready Pink, and go get some rest." Yellow patted Steven on the back and sent her off.

The next day Steven came to the arena, to find Jasper and Amethyst there. Yellow was there to watch. She informed him that he would be fighting against Jasper and alongside Amethyst. When she called for them to commence, Jasper rushed in quick, nearly mowing him over. He dodged and threw up his bubble, so Jasper turned her attention to Amethyst. Steven tried to go in for a punch to stop Jasper, but she stoped it with ease. Stressing, namely from the stress of combat being compounded from the stress of being

observed by Yellow, Steven turned pink. He rushed past Jasper and grabbed Amethyst. Pulling her in tight for a bubble, a bright light flashed. Standing in their stead was a single grey fusion. Yellow swiftly poofed Jasper si she wouldn't see, before turning her attention to Smokey Quartz, who was panicking.

"Oh my stars what is this! It's fusion Steven. I don't understand!" Smokey was yelling.

"Unfuse this instant so I can shatter that Amethyst!" Yellow shouted, before zapping Smokey, who brushed off the attack, panicked suddenly, and unfused, to Steven and a poofed Amethyst. Steven bubbled Amethyst and shifted pink, running to his chambers, he managed to outpace Yellow, before telling the pebbles to hide Amethyst's gem. He then powered down and blacked out.

He awoke soon after to find Yellow, having harassed the pebbles into giving the gem over, was about to pop the bubble in order to shatter Amethyst. Despite giving just regained consciousness, he pushed himself to jump up to Yellow's hight, and tapped the bubble to send it off. As he did it, he whispered his apology to Amethyst, as he did not know where the bubbles went when he sent it off. Yellow was livid, as flustered as she tried to find an adequate punishment. Finally she settled that he would be banished to the Zoo. Of course, due to the agreements that Steven and Pearl has forced her to make, he would still be allowed to see Garnet on his birthday. That would be the end of the punishment, she decided, as after that he would revive his full political power.

Immediately after being brought to the Zoo, he began exercising what few political powers he already had. "Pearl, according to the last report from Facet-2F5L Cut-5XG, there is a human living at the town Beach City, alongside two gems, I want the human brought to the Zoo, and the two gems captured. And I want them brought here a fortnight and 4 days from now, no sooner no later."

"Steven, are you aware of what your doing?" Pearl asked, panicked.

Steven gave her a nod. "I have a plan."

Chapter 1

The Diamond Chime rang as Yellow came into the zoo. "Pink, it's your 'birthday' and so I'm supposed to let you see that sapphire, so come on and let's make it quick" Steven came out of the zoo and followed. "Ahem" Yellow said, "Why isn't your Pearl following?"

"Oh, I have a shipment of a new human coming in today, so I asked her to stay in case I'm not back in time to handle it." Steven said. If Yellow understood human emotional cues, she would have been able to see how nervous Steven was, but, thankfully for Steven, she was none the wiser. Steven followed her to Yellow's room, where Ruby and Sapphire were bubbled.

"I will be waiting right outside." Yellow said, opening the door.

"But Yellow dont you uh... have colonies to attend to?" Steven asked.

"Right now the most important matter I have is to tend to you not escaping your punishment. Steven gulped but walked in nonetheless, before freeing Garnet.

Ruby and Sapphire formed. Ruby started to ask if Pearl was ok, but Sapphire fused with her quickly, cutting her off. Garnet checked her future vision. "Steven, I know you haven't gotten to see us fused before, and that you have lots of questions, but you don't have time. I'm sure you don't remember, but when we first got here, the Diamonds put a device on all of our gems to rejuvenate us if we cross a trigger boundary in the outer atmosphere. Your plan will only work if you bubble us and send us away. Quickly!"

"Ok, me and Pearl will find you once we escape."

"No it's on her too. All of us. All of the Crystal gems that were when you were little."

"What about me, how will I make it."

"You... won't. Not exactly. But I don't have time to explain. Just remember Steven, follow your heart, it's what makes you better than the other Diamonds. See you on the other side" Garnet dissipated her form, leaving only the gemstones behind.

. . .

The zoo had been emptied of guards. Steven had told said that he would be attending personally, so all the guards were required to leave so they wouldn't see them. Of course, he 'missed it' Pearl knew that was a hoax, but homeworld sure didn't. Pearl walked into the ship, vacant but for its prisoners.

"Well if it isn't a homeworld Pearl. I know you won't question your master, I've felt with Pearls before, but I'm sure you would like being a crystal gem if you could... It's a shame really. I mean, who do you serve anyways?" Bismuth asked, rambling away what she thought may be one of her last breaths.

"I serve nobody." said Pearl.

"Pearl? Is that you? What's the plan?"

"Well I'm supposed to take the prisoner to the zoo and you all to the anvil, but it would be a shame if the human stole my Diamond's warp whistle and kidnapped Pink Diamond who is in Yellow's room with Garnet, while you all hijacked the ship." Pearl dropped the destabilization field and set Connie free, handing her the warp whistle.

"Pearl, I know you well enough to know when you're hiding something. What is it? And where is Rose?" Bismuth asked.

"Rose... It's complicated. But she..." Pearl shook her head "She's gone. And there is more:" Pearl's hands shot up to cover her mouth. She pried then off. "But I cant tell you know. When we make it back." Pearl ran off, ready to join up with Steven.

"Ok guys. Lapis, Peridot, Connie, Rose Quartz May be gone, shattered by the Diamonds no doubt, but the crystal gems live on! You all heard the plan, let's chop to it!" The group dispersed to do

their jobs.

. . .

Steven was standing in the room alone when Pearl walked in. "Pearl, Garnet told me that I need to send you off in a bubble so you don't get rejuvenated. So... I'm sorry but..."

"Of course. I'll defer to Garnet's judgement. Pearl dissipated her form to let Steven bubble her. Just as Steven sent her off, a human barged in.

"Ah the rescue crew. Let's get moving shall we?" Steven said to the human.

"What? Your not going to fight?" Connie shook her head "Never mind, let's hurry." She saw this person, who was supposed to be the big menacing Pink Diamond, but was actually a pudgy human looking boy, whisper something to the wall, before a small trapdoor opened in the floor. They rushed inside and were let out by small pebble sized gems next to a warp pad. She blew the warp whistle, and pulled them into the ship the gems had stolen. The gems grabbed him and threw him into the cell, turning on the destabilization field.

"Where is the Pearl?" Peridot asked.

"I don't know." Connie answered.

"Shattered by Pink Diamond no doubt." Replied Bismuth.

"Actually I just bubbled her, you see..." Steven chose his next words carefully, not sure of their stance on fusion. "My Sapphire said it was the best course of action."

"Oh I see, bubbled for all eternity in your room."

"Actually I have no clue where the bubbles go."

"As if! Connie, this is a good learning opportunity: A Diamond will always try and deceive you. From the lies out of her mouth right down to the falsely human form. They always want you to think

they are helpless so you let your guard down."

"Um, you got it a bit off. I'm not shapeshifting, this is my form. I'm half human." Steven said. He felt a jolt go up his spine, but he thought nothing of it.

"Oh really? You never cared about the Earth, that's why Rose fought you in the war. You would never have a kid there, so you couldn't be that kid."

"Oh! I see the misunderstanding. You see, Rose Quartz and Pink Diamond are the same person. They fought a fake war that ended in the fake shattering of Pink Diamond."

"Ha! At least you can make me laugh! The gem war was all too real, and you can see we lost, all the other gems are gone. You wanna prove your story? Summon Rose's shield."

Steven began to pull out his shield. His gem glowed, but all that was made was a jittery mess, as his gem's glow faded.

"See guys? Fake! Come on, let's get back to piloting." The other gems walked off but Connie stayed behind.

"I don't know why I thought they would believe me. I should have just stayed quiet." He curled up into a ball.

"Hey, I believe you." Connie said, comforting him.

"Why? It'll just hurt you in the end." He started crying "I just wanted to be free, I just wanted to" his words were to muffled to be understood.

"And you are free... well kinda. They think you are a diamond. They think your responsible for the war, and for Rose's death. Bismuth is the only one who has ever even met a diamond, and that was in the war. Maybe your mom wasn't the best, but you aren't your mom. You are you."

His crying let up some. "I may not be her, but she defines me. She is my gem, my title, my heritage and my legacy. Everything that I am is her. Even..." Steven stopped himself.

"But she is not you. She is a part of you, but you are different then her. What about your human half?"

"Everything that defines how I'm worse than her, everything that defines why it would have been better if she never gave birth to me, that is the only thing that makes me different. WHY! WHY DID SHE HAVE TO GIVE BIRTH TO ME! IT WOULD BE BETTER IF I WAS NEVER BORN!" He broke down, sobbing heavily once more. "And look at me, just a crumpled up mess. Homeworld probably is already hunting us down. I've endangered the Earth, and I've endangered the crystal gems. And now my powers are gone, so I can't even help defend them." Connie stepper though the field. Steven stepped out "Stop. I'm worthless, I don't deserve you affection. I'm nothing more than everything bad about my mom compiled and compounded on. I don't deserve your compassion."

"What about that?" She said pointing to him.

"Huh?"

"You walked through the destabilization field just fine. Could your mom do that? Maybe homeworld thinks your worthless, but homeworld thinks every person on this ship is worthless, but we busted you out under their watch. You aren't defined by what you can do or what others think of you. You're not even defined by what you have done. You are defined by what you chose to do now, and by what you aspire to do, and who you aspire to become."

Steven sniffled "You... you're right. Thank you." He stepped though and held her hands. She turned it into a hug. His gem began to glow, and their bodies followed, but the glow sputtered out and died off. To Bismuth's call, Connie left.

Chapter 2

The ship slowed for decent, and landed on Earth in front of Beach City. The temple on the mountainside stood tall, as Steven was being carried in by Bismuth. Bismuth held Steven under her arm until Peridot installed the destabilization field from the ship to the bathroom door, after which Steven was left in the bathroom. Discussions began immediately as for what to do with him.

"I say we shatter her. Swift and easy." Bismuth opened offensively.

"We could just bubble her and send her off. Then there is no shards and she's stuck in the temple forever anyways." Peridot countered.

"But wait!" Connie interjected.

"You have the floor" Bismuth said, waiting for her to finish impatiently.

"If you shatter him or bubble him then... What if the Diamonds come?" Connie said scrambling.

"What are you getting at?" Lapis asked, Bismuth nodded, agreeing with the sentiment.

"Well if the Diamonds come, we could use him as a bargaining chip. Otherwise they would just kill us all!" Connie answered.

"We could just not send her off, but leave her bubbled." Lapis suggested.

"But then... we wouldn't be able to uh... break his spirit. If he is bubbled and the Diamonds unbubble him then he would just join them, but if we break his spirit, he wouldn't fight with them." Connie ad-libbed.

"You make a compelling case, we will leave her unbubbled and

imprisoned for now, but if she tries anything fishy we will poof her and bubble her. Any objections?" The other gems shook their heads. Connie settled for this, not wanting to push her luck.

. . .

Steven remained locked up for the next few days. As much as Connie wanted to comfort him, She didn't want the other gems finding out, from fear of retribution against Steven. Eventually though, there was a gem monster on the loose under the sea, so the other gems were gone for a few days. Once they had left, Connie opened the door to the bathroom and sat down next to Steven.

"Connie! You should go, I don't want the gems getting mad." Steven said.

"You need some company Steven; And anyways, the gems are out hunting a corrupted gem for the next few days"

"I don't need company, I've gone years without, what's a few more. But before you go, what's a corrupted gem?"

"You know, those giant gem monsters, they rampage about. They lost their minds thousands of years ago. Ringing any bells?"

"Oh! You mean the experiments! There are a few in Yellow's room."

"No no. Those are something different. These... they are like animals. No mind only instinct. The gem itself is intact but the mind isn't. They are scared, they don't have their memories, their mind is broken, and they are deformed."

"Emotion, Mind, Memories, Form. So that's what they are. How could... something so heinous." Steven broke down into sobs, the last of what he said barely comprehensible.

"Steven! What's wrong?" Connie asked worriedly. "Is it a sore subject for you?"

"Just another horrible thing my mom did. I just... I just thought she was better than that. She protected the Earth, she wanted to

make a safe place for gems, but why would she hurt them? I just felt like I finally knew who she was, but now she maimed the gems on Earth too?"

"Wait, so corruption is..."

"Damage from the Diamonds who else could do something like that?" Steven's crying got heavier again.

"Steven... I know how hard it can be to accept who your parents are. I lost my parents too. Every time I learn something new about them... something I didn't know, it's like the rug is being ripped out from under me; And my parents are just normal people. I can't imagine what it's like for you, but if you need someone to talk to" Connie wiped away his tears "I'm here ok?"

"Ok. What... what happened to your parents anyways?"

Connie's eyes darted away. "That's... that's not important. Come on, let's watch a movie. It'll help get your mind off things."

"A movie? What's that?" Steven gave Connie an inquisitive look.

I'll show you! Come on!" Connie ran out the door. Steven walked though, but then he curled up into a ball and started shaking. The TV sputtered to life without Connie's input, and Steven had a pulsating pink glow. On the television, broken clips played between static. It was evident it was something that happened on homeworld, and it was from Steven's perspective, but the flashes were too brief to tell what was happening. As suddenly as it started, the TV turned off, and Steven stopped glowing, but he was still shaking in a tight ball.

"Steven! What's wrong?" Connie asked, rushing to see if he was ok.

Steven was mumbling something "Yellow I didn't mean... No no! Don't!" Sobbing erupted from Steven.

"Steven!" Connie started snapping to get his attention "Snap out of it!"

Steven uncurled to show a mortified look on his face.

"Are you ok? Do you need to talk about anything?

"I'm fine."

"Are you sure?"

"Yes I'm fine. Let's see this movie thing."

Reluctantly, Connie began playing the movie. As much as she didn't want him to watch it, her only movies were horror movies, as she had forgotten she loaned Dogcopter to a friend from school. Luckily she had a overly cheese one, so she went with that one. In the end it didn't matter, as Steven wasn't really watching, just staring off into space. He was completely zoned out until he was startled not by the movie, but by the crack of thunder overhead.

"Oh no! Was that an explosion? Did a ship crash? Are they trying to take me back to homeworld? Oh my stars, I've put you all in danger! I should go, I don't want you getting hurt." Steven ran outside and barreling through beach city. At first, he didn't know where he was going, just trying to get far away, but slowly, tugging distant memories lead him to a old defunct car wash. He had had tugging memories before. Memories from his mom. But this one felt different somehow, like it was... his. As he ran, his form shifted slightly. A bit more monstrous. Horns atop his head and a row of hooked spikes down his back barely not piercing his shirt. He opened the door, breaking the deadbolt. Navigating to a room in the back, he fell to his knees at a bloodstain on the floor. It was here. He wasn't sure how he knew, but he knew that this was the spot where it happened, but he wasn't sure what. Nevertheless it tugged at his mind, dragging him down. He knew he had been here before, and he knew something had happened here, but he didn't know what. Finally, Connie caught up to him.

"That bloodstain... it's been here for as long as I can remember. We had a dicter analyse it at one point, he said it was the strangest thing he had ever seen, that it only had one chromosome set, almost as though the man had no mom."

"Huh. How nice it would be to be such a man." Steven said. The spikes and horns faded away.

"Why did you come here? Do you know something about it?" Connie asked.

"Not now, but I did at some point, of that much I'm sure." Steven said. "I should keep going. Don't follow me this time, I want to get away, I want to keep you safe."

"Steven. It was just thunder. It happens all the time on Earth."

"What?"

"Well the sky builds up electricity slowly and then it all comes down at once in a bolt of lightning, which makes a loud noise called thunder."

"That sounds very dangerous."

"Well it is if you get hit by the lightning, but that rarely ever happens." The pitter-patter of rain drummer against the roof.

"What's that?"

"That? It's just rain. It's where water in clouds comes down in little droplets."

"Is it safe?"

"Completely. Let's head home." The two of them meandered home. Upon arriving, Connie heard the ringing of the phone. Answering, she heard Peridot on the other end

"Connie, what's going on? My gem radar detected a corrupted gem, and then it didn't. Did you poof it? Does one of us need to come back to bubble it?"

"Oh no no, there was a corrupted gem, and it broke into the defunct car wash, and then just disappeared. I don't know how, it got out of my view."

"Well ok then, be on the lookout." Peridot hung up.

"Do... do you think I'm corrupted?"

"No of course not! It was probably some other gem nearby. I just said it was you so you didn't get in trouble for breaking the door, because they will think it was the corrupted gem. Come on, let's get to bed. It's getting a bit late. They both went off and drifted off to sleep.

Chapter 3

The next day came, and Connie and Steven sat outside at the beach watching the waves roll in and out. She wanted to do something with him, but wanted to steer clear of electronics after the incidents of the day prior. Steven was entranced by the crashing of waves, but Connie wanted something a bit more exciting to do, as the luster of waves had worn off after living on the beach for almost 17 years. Then, as if in answer to her prayers, one of Connie's friends from school came by, passing out fliers. Connie got up and walked over to say hello.

"Hey Patrica, what's up."

"Nothing much here Connie, but I heard Sour Cream is holding a rave tonight, so I thought maybe you would like to swing by."

"Sounds fun, I'll be there, what time does it start."

"It starts at noon. He's doing it early since it's a school night, but it will be going all night long."

"Sweet, maybe I'll swing by." Said Connie heading back to Steven. "Hey Steven, so a friend of mine invited me to a rave today, you wanna come with?"

"What's a rave?"

"Oh it's a big party where lots of people get together and dance."

"If that is anything like what balls on Homeworld used to be in Era 1 I'm not interested. They are so methodical and... boring."

"It's nothing like that. Dancing on Earth is all about being yourself and having fun!"

"Sounds interesting. Why not; I'll go."

After watching the waves a while longer, Connie got Steven some

Earth clothing, and the two of them left to go to the rave.

Arriving at the party, Connie started introducing Steven to her human friends, with mixed success.

"So Steven, this is Sadie, and Sadie, this is Steven" introduced Connie.

"Nice to meet you Steven. Sadie reached her hand out for a handshake. Steven just stared inquisitively before mimicking the gesture. Sadie laughed awkwardly and shook his hand, before escaping back to the crowd.

Eventually Steven got the hang of introductions, but the two of them found that Steven's resivour for conversation was quite limited, as homeworld offered little to talk about, and less that he could talk about without drawing to much attention to his origins. When confident Steven wouldn't be a social timebomb, Connie walked off for some punch.

She was wrong.

Almost immediately, he introduced himself to the 'cool kids' who started to ask him questions about himself, which he all to happily answered. After they determined that he had some knowledge of gems, they referred him to Connie.

"You should meet Connie; she knows all about gems." Sour Cream suggested.

"Ya, she and her family protect the Earth from the 'Evil Pink Diamond' because she wants to destroy the Earth." Jenny added.

"I don't like that, the earth is pretty rad." Buck agreed.

Steven began to glow slightly and lift off of the ground. "Does every person on this planet hate me for who my mom was!" His shirt lifted slightly, revealing his glowing pink gem. It only took a moment for the Cool Kids to put together who he was.

"Wait, your Pink Diamond's Son? You seem pretty cool." Said Jenny, consoling him.

"You don't seem evil to me" added Sour Cream. Steven began to calm down, and his pink glow sputtered out.

This spectacle however, was not the center of attention.

As Connie made her way to the punch bowl, she was approached by a dude in his twenties.

"Hey there girl, how ya doing?"

"Who are you?"

"My name's Kevin. Now, can I have this dance?"

"I'm 16."

"Point being? Come on girl, I ain't got all day. This is a once in a lifetime opportunity." Connie turned away to continue to the punch bowl, but Kevin went to get her attention by putting his hand on her shoulder. She, however, did not take kindly to this gesture, and slammed him into the ground.

"Oh, so it's a fight you want!" Kevin rolled up his sleeves. The fight began to shift to a pit fight as people started to swarm. It was at this point that Steven, having freshly calmed down, saw this and intervened. While typically one for talking, Steven neglected that step, instead opting to tap Kevin on the shoulder, and then punch him in the gut. However, an unexpected burst of power from his faltering gem rendered his punch more powerful then expected and launched Kevin though the crowd, which wisely had parted, into the opposing wall, cracking it. This was met with cheers from the crowd, many of whom had distain for Kevin from past experiences with him. Steven then knelt dos and checked that Connie was ok. After verifying her wellbeing, she suggested they move out before anything bad happened.

Swiftly retreating, they left to the beach they had been upon a while earlier.

"It's a shame, I never got to try this Earth dancing." Steven said, disappointed.

"I mean, we could do it here." Connie quickly fetched a tape and boombox from the house, and played some music, and they began to dance and let loose. Steven tripped over Connie's foot, but she caught him. Suddenly in a bright glow, the two of them fused together.

"Woah what's going on?"

"I think we fused."

"I thought only gems could do that?"

"Maybe it's because I'm half human?"

"Is it always this tiresome?"

"I don't know, I only did this once before, and it wasn't for long."

"Ok, because of I didn't know better I'd say that your gem is giving out." They glanced down to see their faltering gem.

"Steven I don't think it's supposed to do that."

"You think? I don't have a clue what's causing that!" The two unfused. They sat down and watched the waves for what was left of the day, enjoying the warm glow of the sunset as it settled below the horizon.

Calling it a day, they went I side and settled down. Steven examined his gem in the bathroom mirror. Trying to use a handfull of his powers, he saw the faltering glow of his gemstone.

"Wait... when I was leaving, Garnet mentioned a device on my gem that would rejuvenate me if I went to far. Maybe this is from that?" Steven checked his gem for the device and found it. He snapped it off, and felt a small jolt. Since he already had been rejuvenated, it didn't really matter if it happened again. After sharing with Connie his findings he went to bed.

Chapter 4

The next morning Steven came out in his own once he heard Connie waking up. "So what are we going to do today?"

"Oh! Good morning Steven. I have school today, so..."

"What's school?" Steven asked

"Oh it's a place where you go to learn things"

"Sounds fun."

"Eh... sometimes it is sometimes it isn't."

Steven returned to the bathroom to freshen up, meanwhile Connie set out for school. Steven came out of the bathroom again to see Connie having left, so he hurried off to catch up, but remembering what Connie had told him about not drawing too much attention to himself after the party the previous night, he walked briskly to avoid running, trailing a ways behind her. Eventually, after passing through the gates to Connie's school, Steven caught up.

"Connie, why did you leave me back at the beach house?"

"Steven! Your not supposed to be here!"

"I know I'm supposed to stay in the bathroom but the gems aren't here and we haven't worried about it the past two days."

"No I mean specifically here! You need to enroll if you want to go to school, otherwise you are trespassing, and in a school that is a serious offense."

"Oh I'll just leave then." Steven turned to leave before Connie cut him off

"No! If you try and leave they will think your a student trying to

escape and then take you in and check for your record. When they don't find one, you'll be in big trouble! No, our only option is for you to pretend to be a student, and hope nobody notices."

The first half of the day went smooth. Steven sat in the back of the class and was silent, a sure fire way to not get noticed in classes by the students. Luckily the teachers didn't seem to catch on either.

Then came lunch, where a notoriously mean-spirited kid walked up to Steven and began to mock him.

"Oh look here; I haven't seen you here before. What's your name?"

"My name is Ste—"

"I don't care! So why are you here huh? Were you just so boring and lame I never noticed you, or were you actively trying to hide?" Steven started to get angry, and his gem started to glow a bit before he calmed himself. "Oh! What you got under your shirt?" The kid lifted Steven's shirt. "Oh, I see, so it was just that you were to boring for me to notice, because clearly you want the attention. After all, why else would you stoop so low as to bedazzle yourself and masquerade as a freak of nature?"

Steven was really starting to get riled up, but luckily he was saved by the bell. The kid left in a huff while Steven and Connie went along to the next class.

"Connie, I don't get it, is every human but you a jerk? I haven't met one other human who hasn't made wild assumptions about me off of barely any information."

"There are plenty of good people out there just like me Steven, it's just that the terrible people tend to be the most outspoken."

"It sure seems like with the exception of you, a prerequisite of being a human is making baseless assumptions." Finally they arrived at their next class, and the remainder of the school day went without a hitch.

Arriving home, Connie went up to the Beach House whole Steven

lagged behind to admire the setting sun.

"Well Connie, you have some explaining to do." Sounded Bismuth's voice.

"Oh uh Bismuth... Didn't see you there. Your home early..." Connie said nervously.

"I know. Since we knew you had school today, Peridot thought to use the surveillance cameras she installed into the bathroom when we locked Pink in there, only to find she wasn't there at all. So tell me Connie, why wasn't she there?"

Connie began to fumble over her words when Steven walked inside.

"Well I guess I will just ask her." Bismuth said, turning to Steven. "So Pink, how did you get out of our holding cell?"

" I just walked out? I told you I'm half human. I can't poof, so those fields don't work on me."

"As if I'd buy that story." Bismuth pinned Steven against the wall. "So tell me, how did you get out?"

"Let me go!" Steven grunted, barely able to breathe.

"What are you going to do, shatter me?"

"I would never"

"Why not? Why would a diamond not want to shatter a 'traitorous rebel gem' like me?"

"Because I have compassion!" Steven's gem began to glow violently, and he summoned his bubble. "Sweet, that's my powers back!" He dropped his bubble

"I should have poofed you from the start." Said Bismuth, standing back up from having been knocked back by Steven's bubble.

"I told you, I don't poof."

"I know one way to poof any gem." Before Steven had a chance to react, Bismuth ripped out Steven's gem.

Chapter 5

Bismuth held the gem of Pink Diamond in her hand. She had wanted this moment for almost 5,000 years, but one thing was off. Steven was standing there still.

"Ok Bismuth, you've seen I'm half human, now give me back my gem, before things get messy." Steven said.

"How are you still standing?" Bismuth asked.

"Well, this isn't the first time my gem was removed" Steven grimaced for a moment before he continued "I'm dying slowly without it, but I've learned to bear through the pain. The Diamonds can slow down my gem half, but they can't slow me as easily."

Bismuth looked at him bewildered, before the gem in her hand began to glow. Connie took a step back.

Gem Steven swiftly took his footing and grabbed for his human half, but Bismuth pushed human Steven out of the way. Steven groveled upon the ground as Bismuth turned to his gem. "I'm not letting you off that easy Pink!" Bismuth came in with a jab to the gut, shifting her hand to a point.

In a flash, the diamond stood behind Bismuth. As Bismuth turned to look, she was hoisted by her neck, suspended by one pink hand, as the other hand rose, facing towards Bismuth, open palmed.

"No! Stop! Your going to hurt her!" Steven shouted to his other half from the floor.

The hand began to emanate a pink pulsing glow.

"Don't hurt her, she doesn't understand!"

The glow spread, encompassing Bismuth. Pink cracks began to appear across Bismuth's form.

"Nooooo!"

Clink

Bismuth's gem fell upon the hard wooden floor, and the diamond fused once more with Steven. Steven knelt next to the gemstone, bubbling it and gently releasing it to the air.

"Why did you poof her?" Connie asked, recovering from the shock.

"I didn't. When my gem is separated, I don't control it."

"I thought you only knew how to bubble though? That wasn't bubbling that your gem half was doing!"

"I can't do anything but bubbling, that and summon my shield. My gem however, has the full arsenal. The Diamonds think my human half is holding back my gem, but my gem is, well *reluctant* to be separated from me, as you saw."

"Okay, okay, but why did you bubble her."

"I was hoping you wouldn't ask that. That power that he used, that was the aura of Pink Diamond. It makes gems forget everything they knew. To put it in earth terms, it restores them to factory default. I figured it would be more painful for everyone to see her like that then to just bubble her."

"There's a way to fix her, right? There has to be a way to fix her!"

"Well when I lost my powers I recovered them by remembering something that made me special, but who knows what that is for Bismuth, or even if that would work."

Connie fell to the floor at the prospect of losing Bismuth forever, while Steven turned pink from his chagrin.

The house phone began to ring, and Connie picked up. Peridot was on the other end.

"Hello?" Connie answered

"Hello Connie, it's Peridot, the radar is picking up a corrupted gem in the desert, can you patch Bismuth through so I can give her the breakdown?

"That's going to be a problem."

"Why? Is Pink giving her some problems?"

"Well Steven gave her some problems. Do you have a minute? You might want to sit down"

"I have much longer than a minute, what is going on?"

Connie recounted the events of the day to Peridot, who was mortified. Peridot then asked to speak to Steven directly.

Peridot's voice rang timidly through the phone. "So you are the Steven yes?"

"I'm so sorry! I... I can't control what my gem does when it's removed! I tried to stop him, he wouldn't listen! I want to make it up to you; I want to be a Crystal Gem. I get it if you don't want me, after all this is all my fault."

"Oh uh well, perk up Steven, we all don't fit in on homeworld, and anyways, if what you told us on the ship was true, then you are the one who should be leading us." The conversation ended aquwardly with neither party having anything to say, and then Steven passed the phone back to Connie.

"So he wants to be a Crystal Gem, and considering how powerful he is, I don't think we really have much of a choice. Besides, he might be the key to fixing Bismuth, and I don't want to get rid of her only hope. At least he's on our side." Peridot said "Anyways, I guess you and Steven will be getting that Gem in the desert. We'll meet you back at the temple, it shouldn't be too much longer.

Chapter 6

Steven and Connie set off to the desert. As they settled from the warp, Steven rushed ahead, Connie struggling to keep his pace. Even from the warp, the gem was by no means close; Connie packed for the heat, but Steven insisted that it couldn't be worse than homeworld and set off unencumbered. Connie trodden steadily across the desert, meanwhile Steven continued his charge, lacking any signs of stopping. By the time the huge construct of sand came into view, Connie could barely see Steven over the horizon.

Steven, ever brazen in his assault, bounded up with all the strength he could muster; bolstered by his gem he bounded most of the way to the top, and then latched onto the sandy barrier with his hand. The sand however began to slide, despite the wall holding steady in its shape. Steven tumbled down, narrowly breaking his fall with a deftly summoned bubble. Popping the bubble, Steven began to unleash his unguarded fists upon the wall, which would break and reform between each blow. Encompassed in his attack against the wall, he payed no attention to the other walls which had been forming and disappearing swiftly about him. These ever-forming began to close in about him, as he grew angry in his lack of success.

Connie finally began to reach the outside edge of the collapsing walls as they closed about where Steven was. Connie began to circle about, looking for an alternative path when she heard a scream of anger and rage emanate from Steven. Rushing back she saw Steven, with the last traces of a pink glow fading from his skin, encased within a thick wall of glass, the only indication of how it happened being a somewhat obvious fist shaped mark in the wall, and Steven cradling a broken hand. Connie approached, wiping the sand that had been stirred into the air by Steven's blow from her glasses. Standing near the glass encasement, Connie began to think of a way to get Steven out.

Connie had been muttering ideas, but Steven was the first to

speak up. "Just leave me here"

"What?"

"Just leave me. I've only caused you trouble, and now I'm stuck. No point in trying to get me out, I'm just going to cause you more issues."

"I won't just leave you. I can't and I won't."

"I don't know if I can survive out here without food and water, but I know you can't. Just save yourself. Maybe you and the gems can pick me up in the ship if I'm still alive."

"No, I literally can't leave. You warped is here remember? I have no way home."

"Oh, well that puts a dent in things doesn't it."

"Well how would you normally get out of something like this? I'm sure you can think of something."

"Well normally I could jump up and try to climb out, but I can't do that with a broken hand."

They sat there for nigh an hour, with still nothing to show for it.

"Oh Steven, I just realized you had nothing to drink. Here, I'll toss a canteen over."

"Don't bother, you need it more than I."

"Steven it doesn't matter if I survive out here if you're too dead to get me home; and anyways I don't want you to die, especially from dehydration, I hear it's a terrible way to go."

Begrudgingly, Steven accepted. Connie tossed the canteen over, from which Steven took a small sip before tossing back.

"Well you probably should have drunken a bit more than that, but at least it's something." Connie took a quick swig before setting down the canteen.

In a few more minutes of brainstorming, Connie felt the beginnings of a headache. Connie removed her glasses only to find her sight fine without them, and the headache swiftly alleviated.

"Steven! My eyesight!"

"What about it?"

"It's better all of a sudden! I don't need my glasses!"

Steven stared at her blankly.

"That's not a normal thing Steven, it's like my eyesight magically got better." Connie did a double take "Wait, maybe you magically healed my hand somehow!"

"I know my mom could heal people with her tears, but I didn't cry on you"

"Well I don't exactly know how it works, but maybe one of the gems does"

They sat around for a bit longer. "Wait Steven, didn't your mom have like a super-sonic scream? Maybe you can break the glass by screaming?"

"Yeah... she did. How did you know that though?"

"Bismuth- She used to tell us stories of her past. She told me that once she overheard Yellow scolding Pink for breaking her pearl with such a scream while handling routine maintenance on the Reef."

"Oh, well ok then. Either way, that's not a power I have control of."

"Can you try?"

"Fine." Steven said before screaming to no avail. "See, nothing"

"It was worth a sho- OH MY STARS WHAT IS THAT?"

Steven turned just in time to see a huge pink beast, which seemed

to be a lion, hurling towards them. Suddenly, it let out a roar and the glass shattered around Steven. It then stood before him calmly. Steven carefully reached his intact hand out, which the lion nuzzled up against. "He seems to like me"

"Must have something to do with your mom"

"Yep. What gave it away, the pink or the magic roar?"

"Fair enough. Anyways, are we going to look a gift horse in the mouth or are we going to get the corrupted gem and head home."

"How are we going to do that?"

"Oh right..." Connie thought for a moment. "Oh I know! Gems are stronger when they fuse, so maybe we could fuse to get a little more height out of your jump to get over the walls?" They tried to fuse together, but they were too unstable and fell apart before the fusion could finish.

"Well that didn't work. If only we could just tell the lion to go get the gem" Steven let a chuckle. "That would never happen though"

As Steven said that, he heard a loud roar. The two of them spun around to see the lion was missing. Suddenly the sand castle collapsed and the lion came out with the gem.

"Well... I guess I stand corrected." Steven said. Despite his bewilderment, Steven grabbed the pillow and bubbled it, before he and Connie began the trek home.

Chapter 7

They arrived back at the Beach house after a long walk. By the end of it, Steven was quaking in fear. After all, what would he tell the gems? They didn't know him, the only thing they knew was that he had all but destroyed the friend. He steeled himself; it wasn't his first confrontation and it wouldn't be his last. Steven and Connie warped in, to find Peridot alone in the beach house.

"Well *Steven*" He didn't like the way she said his name. It was clinical, but confrontational. It reminded him far too much of White. "You said you wanted to be a crystal gem. I'm going to allow that" Peridot was quaking. It was apparent that even though she was trying to keep an authoritative demeanor, she couldn't muster the courage to face someone with the power of a Diamond, much less when their last victim was drifting in the air near her head. "However, you will have to travel with me at all times, to ensure you aren't endangering anyone else. I'd like to believe you won't, but I would rather be safe.

Connie glared at Peridot. "I'm already keeping watch over him. He trusts me. Do you really want to thrust him into a situation he is uncomfortable with? Do you think that will end well?"

"Connie; there is limits to what a human can do. He is a Diamond; you aren't ready to handle that."

"Uh... I'm right here" Steven interjected.

"Maybe you should stop acting like he is attacking everyone on sight. Try keeping him calm and being kind instead of being constantly ready to attack him?"

"It's what Bismuth would do!"

"And look where that got her."

"I just don't think you are ready for that kind of responsibility."

"I've lived here for 16 years, when will I be?"

"I'm not sure"

"Why don't you trust me?"

"Well maybe I would if you hadn't failed at the simple task of doing nothing and basically got Bismuth killed because of it!" Peridot covered her mouth, not meaning to take it that far, but Connie was already tearing up.

"Connie! Peridot! Before either of you hurt each other's feelings more than you already have; dont I get a say in this? I understand that Peridot doesn't trust me enough to leave me with Connie, and I understand that Connie doesn't feel Peridot will treat me like a person, but there is no reason that I can only be with one of you; we don't need to split up, we can all just stick together." Both of them grumbled, as despite the fact that they both got what they wanted, neither was happy with the terms.

Connie didn't really want to be with Peridot after what she said to her, but she didn't want to leave Steven, so she dealt with it. The three of them went outside so Steven could speak to Lapis. Unlike Peridot, Lapis had no issue getting in his face. She swooped down from above and immediately took to yelling.

"Why did you do it? Why did you rejuvenate Bismuth?"

"I couldn't control it; she pulled out my gem"

"Oh so just because she attacked you; the person, mind you, that got all her friends killed in a fake war, means you get to blast her memories out of existence!"

Peridot stepped in "Lapis we've been over this he isn't rose or Pink he's -"

"I don't want to hear it! Even excluding everything that Pink did, he still, in the one week since he had us KIDNAPPED, got Pearl lost in some place that nobody in the galaxy knows and got Bismuth rejuvenated. I'm not letting myself get trapped in whatever harebrained scheme he pulls next. I'm leaving!" Lapis took off on

her wings.

"LAPIS!" Peridot called to no avail.

Steven turned to Connie eyes welling with tears of guilt "Is she going to come back?"

"She hasn't left forever before, so I don't think so." Connie said, resting her arm on him in effort to console him.

"She also has never lost a friend like Bismuth before. I wouldn't be as confident." Peridot said. Connie shot her a glare.

Steven made an effort to dry his tears, but it did nothing to quell the guilt he felt. Lapis was more right than she knew, in the past month Steven got Amethyst Garnet and Pearl lost, destroyed Bismuth's memory, and now driven off Lapis. In fact, if it haven't been for that deus ex machina-esqe save from that lion, he would have gotten Connie killed too. It was his fault that they were gone, plain and simple.

The three of them returned to the beach house, and Steven left to the bathroom where he wept silently on the hard bottom of the bathtub. Connie brought him a pillow and attempted to console him. She accomplished little, but it was better than being left to ferment in the woes of guilt.

Chapter 8

Steven still lie in the tub and Connie was still trying to comfort him. Nonetheless, she was running out of ideas. Eventually she was left with no other choice, and she went to leave. "I'm going to the barn to help Mr. Demayo with fixing his airplane. I was supposed to help him last week but well, things happened."

Steven groaned as he pulled himself to his feet. "Don't I need to come along too?"

"Steven you don't need to come if you don't want to."

"No no, I should. I don't want to create any more animosity between you and Peridot than I already have."

"Well if that's what you want, I'll go get Peridot and we'll all go." Connie ran off to get Peridot, while Steven made himself a bit more presentable. He hadn't heard of a 'barn' before, but it sounded enough like ball that he figured it was likely somewhat formal.

Once the three of them were ready, they warped off to the barn, and walked the rest of the way. Upon arriving, Andy greeted them. "Well hello there Connie. Here to help me with the plane? A little late, but I know how it can be with those gems, a strange folk they are. And I see you brought a friend. Well it's nice to see you hanging out with some humans apart from me and my brother. Speaking of my brother, he's moved in with me here again, it turns out his music business just wasn't cut it for the big city. Anyways, enough with the niceties are you going to introduce me to your friend?"

"Oh, right. This is Steven. He's actually half gem; We rescued him from the zoo."

"Rescued him from the Zoo and not your parent eh? I can't blame you either way, it's more danger than I like. Still I can't believe what those Diamonds are doing up there, it's disgusting."

Connie leaned in close and whispered so that Steven wouldn't hear, but hear he did nonetheless "Dont talk about the diamonds around Steven. He doesn't much care for the actions of his mom. It's a bit of a sore subject." Andy's face revealed that despite not being inclined as to gem history, he had put two and two together.

They walked off to the incomplete plane. Connie and Andy began putting it together, with a little technical help from Peridot. Steven tried to help, but his lack of knowledge when it came to earthen tools and terms made it difficult.

"You know my brother said he was going to help, I wonder when he will be joining" said Andy. He then turned to look only to see him already coming to help. "Oh hey there Greg."

Steven froze in place.

"Hi Mr. Universe." Connie called out.

Andy looked at Steven and then turned to Connie. "Is something wrong with your friend or does he just phase off like that a lot?"

Connie looked at Steven "Are you ok Steven."

He nodded dismissively "Yeah I'm fine"

"Well you heard him Andy. He's been through a lot in the past week, I'm sure he's just taking some time to reflect."

At this point Greg had nearly arrived, when he turned and look at Steven. Greg stopped in his tracks before shaking his head and continuing forward. Steven has been presumed dead for 16 years, although he liked to keep hope he would come back. Even so, if it was Steven, then Pearl or Garnet would have already come to tell him.

"Hey guys, sorry I'm late, you wouldn't believe how hard it is to find a good job; I guess that's what happens when the only thing on your resume is failed musician and car wash owner." Steven's eyes widened as he turned to face Greg. Greg looked at Connie with bewilderment. "Who's the new friend?"

"That's Steven."

"What are the chances that he has the same name as my lost son?" Greg mused, a deep pain could be heard in is voice. Connie was shocked that he said this; Greg never spoke about his life before he lost his child. All Connie had known was that he knew the gems somehow, and that he had lost a son. Andy knee little more, only that Greg had a wife named Rose.

Steven spoke for the first time since Greg had been mention. "Greg Universe. Your child's mother; was her name Rose Quartz?"

"Yes. How did you know?"

Steven gave a small nod. "It's nice to finally meet you." When Steven saw Greg still didn't understand, he lifted his shirt to show his gem. "I'm your son." Everyone gathered, with the exception of Peridot, had questions.

"Your my son?"

"Greg's your dad?"

"Rose was an alien?"

Everyone gave Andy a quick glare. "You know, that was an obvious one. I'll just..." Andy showed himself to the barn.

A warm smile came across Greg's face and he held out his hands for a hug. Steven responded by cowering and covering his gem. Immediately, Greg knelt down and went to cradle Steven's face and ask what was wrong, only to get slammed by a large pink bubble.

"Steven!" Connie shouted, "What's going on?"

Peridot checked Greg for injuries. When she concluded that Greg would be fine, she turned to Connie. "I told you; we needed someone to make sure Steven didn't hurt anyone."

Connie grumbled and turned back to Steven, who was lowering his bubble. "What happened Steven, is something wrong?"

"What he did; it reminded me of when white would..." he shuddered before shaking his head. "Never mind. I should go. I'm just making everything worse. I need to go." Steven had turned pink by this point and took off in a flash. None gathered were able to stop him in time, but Andy, so far from the events, was able to intercept Steven.

"Steven. I know I don't understand this gem stuff, and frankly I couldn't hear much of what was going on, but it's apparent you have some things you need to talk out. Take a seat." Andy pattes the bench next to him as he sat down "I don't understand much of what's going on, but I'll try to be a good listener."

Steven began to be explain while the other came around and listened too. "It was barely a week ago when I broke myself out of the zoo by staging Connie and the Gem's kidnapping. In the process I got Ruby Sapphire Amethyst and Pearl lost in some unknown spot that could be anywhere in the galaxy. From there, I rejuvenated Bismuth after she ripped out my gem, nearly got Connie stranded in a desert, and drove off Lapis. Now I hurt my dad just because his strange gesture reminded me of White. I'm making everything I touch worse." By the time he finished he was crying, and the wood upon which he sat was sprouting branches.

"Strange gesture? Steven, I was going for a hug. Do you not have hugs on Homeworld?" Steven shook his head. "It's a gesture of affection, it shows that I love you."

"They don't exactly do love on Homeworld."

"Well we do love here son. Do you want a hug? I understand if you don't." Steven nodded, tears of joy in his eyes. Greg gave him a big hug, picked him up of the ground. Steven gave a big smile, the likes of which he hadn't made in 16 years. When Greg finally let him go, he hung in the air; much to the bewilderment of Greg and Andy, and the surprise of Connie and Peridot.

"Steven you can float!" Greg exclaimed, the shock not leaving his face.

"It must be a new power." replied Steven, before drifting down

the foot or two.

"Let's catch up on lost time... *son.*"

Chapter 9

Steven and Greg sat down and began to chat, getting to know each other and making up for lost time.

"So Steven, the gems never spoke much about Homeworld, what's it like?"

"I wouldn't know; I was always kept in Pink's room, the Diamonds didn't want other gems to know about my... condition. Occasionally Pearl would pull some strings and arrange for me to visit certain spots, but it was empty; errie nothingness. The walls were blank and flat, the halls were empty; there was just... nothing there."

"Oh ok then, well what did you do there? You were there for 16 years; I'm sure you did something."

"Well I would read reports from soldiers on the ground, and Pearl had brought me some books from Earth to read."

"So you like reading then?"

"No, it's just better than the alternative"

"What's the alternative?"

"I'd rather not talk about it."

"Well than what do you like to do Steven?"

"Well I liked the rave Connie took me to, until things turned sour."

"Well that's a start. How about this: I have two tickets for a concert tonight; me and Andy were going to go but I'm sure he won't mind. How about we give it a visit?"

"What's a concert?"

"Oh it's kind of like a rave, except there is less dancing and the

music is preformed live."

"That sounds like it might be fun; sure how about it."

Peridot stepped in "Now hold on Steven, you still are under our supervision, and he doesn't have enough tickets for all of us."

Steven started to say something when Connie jumped in "He just met his dad for the first time and you aren't going to let them hang out because you can't watch!"

"Just because Greg is Steven's father doesn't means it's suddenly safe to let him go to a crowded stadium full of people"

"Do you realize how ridiculous you are being?"

"Your the one being ridiculous, I'm just trying to prevent Steven from hurting anyone."

Greg intervened before tentions got any higher "Peridot, Connie, I'm his father; he is my responsibility. At least while he is with me, I'll take responsibility for anything he does." Connie smiled in a gloating manner at Peridot, who just grumbled and walked away. "Now then, Steven, why don't you switch into something less formal?" He jésuites to the pink suit Steven was in.

"Oh; this is the only outfit I've ever had."

"Really? Well I have some old merch from my days as a musician, so I'll let you wear that." He opened up his raggedy dresser and pulled out an old black shirt brandishing a large yellow star, alongside some jeans and a pair of red sandals. Steven switched into the clothes, which took him some time to figure out, and then, with the day beginning to grow late, and a fairly long walk to the stadium, they set out; Greg walking side by side with Steven, who was skipping, although he was so floaty it was more akin to a moonwalk.

They sat down in the stadium and watched the concert. The music wasn't very impressive, but Steven was enthralled by they way the musician played his guitar; Steven's keen eye darting to follow the deft movements of the mans fingers. When the concert

cane to a close, they returned to the barn. On they way back, Steven asked Greg to teach him how to play an instrument, to which Greg obliged.

When they returned to the barn, they were informed by Andy that Lapis and Connie had grown tired of waiting and decided to meet Steven back at the beach house. Greg rummaged through him stuff in search of a second guitar, but the only instrument he had two of was ukuleles for some reason, so that's what he taught Steven. They began with simple scales but Steven seemed to have an almost superhuman talent for playing and Greg was quickly running out of things to teach Steven, when Steven broached the topic neither had dared address prior to.

"So Greg- I mean dad, what happened that night? The night I was taken."

"Well Steven, I was warming up a bottle of milk for you, and you were in your crib, but you tried to climb out and hit your head in the floor hard enough you started bleeding. You started crying, and a pink light cake off your body. I called the gems, and they told me that I was going to lose you, and that there was nothing I could do but run to save myself. You were taken, and I hadn't seen you or any of the gems since."

"And what happened from there? How did you wind up here?"

"Well not to long after you were taken Connie's parents were taken as well. The gems took her in, and they called me for help. I raised her for a little bit, but it proved too painful, raising her reminded me too much of you. I left after a while, but still, as I was her main guide to being a human, we stayed in touch. I loved out of the car wash and went to the big city to try and make it as a musician, but that didn't work out, so I came back to the family barn and wound up living here with my brother, your uncle Andy" Steven was unfamiliar with the term, but he figured it out by the context. "So how did you wind up back on Earth?"

Steven took a deep breath in. "Well, I was being punished by being sent to live in the Zoo, and so I pulled some political power to have Connie and the Gems taken, before helping them escape with

me in tow. In the process, I was forced to bubble Ruby Sapphire and Pearl, and I already had done so to amethyst. I sent them off, having no other recourse, but I have no idea where the bubbles went. Then I got here, but since Pearl wasn't here to explain what happened, the gems assumed I was trying to trick them."

"You know your mom, Rose, she told me once about a room of the temple where the bubbled gems went called the Burning Room. The problem is , only Garnet Amethyst Pearl or Rose could open the door. I don't know if that's something you can do, but you can try." Steven thanked him for the information and ran off to the temple.

"

Chapter 10

Steven hurried to the temple and tried to open the door; but he found neither pull nor push would make it budge, and that if he had a power that could open it, it would not manifest itself. As he calmed from the rush of adrenaline and the disappointment began to set in, his attention was drawn to the bickering of Peridot and Connie. He listened in as to the topic of the argument, and was not surprised to learn that it was about leaving him with Greg.

"Guys please stop bickering; everything was fine." Steven pleaded.

"I would if Peridot would just be willing to treat you like another person."

"Well excuse me; if I recall correctly the Crystal Gems are about protecting the earth; if that means that Steven isn't perfectly happy that's just the cost of it."

"Steven is half human; he is part of the earth too. Bismuth would back me up here"

"Maybe she would, but she isn't here right now. I seem to remember that happening on a certain human's watch."

Steven, always trying to keep matters calm, interjected "Calm down! You both make good points, Peridot you need to have more compassion, but Connie, you need to be willing to make concessions to protect the earth."

"Steven, I'm trying to protect *you*" Connie protested

"And in trying to do so you are compromising our very mission" Peridot retorted, annoyed by Connie's perceived naivety.

"Maybe what we all need is a team building exercise to bring everyone back together"

A chime sounded. Peridot pulled a tablet out which seemingly had antenna fashioned of whisks that where whirling away. "Well Steven, it seems there is a corrupted gem in the Great north. Come on, it's on the move we have to hurry" The three crystal gems set off for the warp, before appearing in the great snowy tundra

"So what's the plan guys?" Steven asked; the stress of trying to make piece between Connie and Peridot was easily heard beyond the thin veil of a cheery disposition.

"Well we have you, and my sensors are indicating it's a fairly typical gem, there should be no contest. Me and Connie will get its attention and you will poof it."

"I think you are overestimating me. I have a shield and a bubble, and sometimes some floating. I don't have much else I can rely on."

Connie jumped in "Then we'll do it the old fashion way; corner it and slice it up."

"I don't know if that's the best idea; you only have a sword, I have nothing and Steven's powers are limited; so we might be in trouble."

"It'll be fine. Come on." Reluctantly, peridot stoped arguing.

The mission went smoothly at first, until they reached a fork in he road. Connie and Peridot went in opposite directions, while Steven stood between them.

"Come on Connie, my equipment says the gem is this way."

"But the footprints point this way."

"Maybe it's a wild animal; my equipment is never wrong."

"Your joking right? Earlier this week your equipment said Steven was a corrupted gem"

"Well let me know the next time we chase a Human-Diamond hybrid. Come on Steven; pick someone and let's keep moving"

"I'm sorry Connie, but I think Peridot is right on this one." Steven went down the path with Peridot. Connie huffed and kept on her path while Peridot shot her a gloating look.

The two groups carried on until eventually they converged once more; Connie below a tall cliff that had formed. Admitting she didn't know where the corrupted gem was, she asked Steven to bring her up, but Peridot swift revised that and asked instead to be brought down, as the gem was straight ahead down the cliff. Steven picked her up and kept down. Suddenly a massive bird swooped out of the sky at Steven. He dropped Peridot by mistake as he raised his shield to block, but rather than try to strike with its sharp beak, it swallowed him whole.

Peridot brought herself to her feet to find an enraged Connie with her sword drawn. "This is your fault Peridot! If you had listened to me Steven wouldn't have gotten eaten." Blinded by rage, Connie swung but Peridot rolled out of the way.

"Connie, I want you to put the sword down. We can talk about this."

"You want me to put the sword down? Well I didn't want Steven eaten by a giant bird, but it looks like neither of us are getting what we wanted." Two more strikes were swung and missed.

"Connie, why are you so mad?" Peridot ducked another blow, which grazed her hair.

"Why am I mad? Why am I mad! I'm mad because you refused to treat Steven like he was a person when that was what he so desperately wanted, and now he might be dead because of it!" Connie swept out Peridot's feet and placed her foot on Peridots chest.

"I was just trying to protect you. You are the only other Crystal gem left. Being a crystal gem, it's been a part of me since you Bismuth and Lapis gave me another chance on Earth. I don't want you to get hurt by him."

Connie's rage began to subside for a moment, but a caw from the

bird above reignited her burning fury. "And so you withheld the very same chance from Steven." Connie drew her sword back.

"I'm sorry"

"Too little to late." Connie's sword came down, it's strike a perfect shot to Peridot's gem. Peridot raised her hands to block, but she braces for what she knew was to come.

Pieces of gems began to rain down.

Peridot opened her eyes to see what happened. She had launched Connie's sword which had struck the bird in the gem. Steven had fallen to the ground and was working his way to his feet, Connie having rushed to help him. Once Steven was standing, Connie's attention returned to Peridot. "This is your fault. He could have gotten hurt because of how you treated him!"

"My fault! Your the one who went berserk and tried to kill me!" The bickering began anew.

"This. Is. ***BOTH OF YOUR FAULTS!***" Steven's shout carved out a crater beneath him, and knocked both of them off their feet. "Peridot you instigated this by refusing to treat me like a person, but Connie you took it too far. Both of you are to blame so just shut up! Peridot you need to treat others more kindly, Connie you need to worry more about the teams safety. Now stop this stupid feud!"

They returned in silence. Nobody liked the means,but the feud was over for sure.

Problems

When they got back to the temple, it was decided that Steven could handle himself, but if causes any incidents that was going to change. Everyone needed a little time to themselves anyways. Peridot warped off to somewhere unknown, while Connie relaxed in her bed. Steven, although lacking directions, wander about the town.

Many people walked the streets, speaking in hushed tones and went about the day. Steven navigated the town, his hunger beginning to stir, so he made is way to a nearby bakery called The Big Donut. As he stepped through the door, a tall lanky man greeted him half-heartedly.

"Hello, I like one of those please." Steven pointed to the donuts behind the counter. The man placed one in the bag.

"That'll be a $1.50 sir." The man reached out his hand, which Steven looked at bewildered for a moment, before slapping the mans hand. "Why did you slap my hand?"

"Well you reached out for a high-5 right?"

The man rubbed his temples, mentally preparing himself for the encounter. "No, I'm asking for the payment. For the donut." Steven still looked confused. "You know, money"

"Money..." Steven mused on the word for a moment. "Nope, I don't know, what's that?"

The man blinked at Steven a few times. "You just blow in from off planet or something?"

"Yeah just came from Homeworld 2 weeks ago, was it that obvious?"

The man looked at Steven for a moment to see if he was serious.

When Steven showed no signs of joking, a spark of recognition showed in the mans face. "Wait, are you that hybrid kid I've heard about?"

"Probably; I don't know any others."

"Dude, your the talk of the town! My names Lars. You're Steven right?"

"That's me."

"Yo I thought you were just a myth. Word is you just showed up, turned pink, and then swatted that annoy dude Kevin against the wall like he was a nat."

"Well... yeah but..."

"My shifts almost over, wanna hang out after?"

"Sure I guess"

"Donuts are on the house" Lars saw Steven was confused. "It means there free"

"Oh thanks." Steven sat down outside and began eating his donut while he waited. It swiftly became obvious that Lars had lied about being almost done with his shift, and wanting to make the most of the day, he left to spend some time with his dad; warping to the barn and spotting Greg just as the sun was nearing the horizon.

"What the occasion Steven?" Greg said, excited to see his son.

"Nothing special, just thought I'd hang out with you some"

"That's fine too."

Greg and Steven sat down and started to talk, tossing questions back and forth to get to know each other better. Most of them were lighthearted and fun. Then came the heavy hitters. "Steven, do you miss Homeworld?"

"Your talking like I've been gone for two years not two weeks.

Even so. I can't say I've missed it. Up there, everything is about what I am. It was like that for the past 18 years, and it would be like that for the next 18 centuries. Things aren't perfect for me down here, but it only took two weeks for me to go from 'Steven, Pink Diamond's Son' to just 'Steven' y'know? Up there I'm always 'Steven the half human'

"Is being human all that bad?"

"Being human isn't bad, but what the Diamonds do about that is terrible."

"What did the Diamonds do?"

Steven turned pink "I'd rather not talk about it."

"Ok then, we'll in that case, what do you think about life on Earth so far?"

"Well I like how free it is" The pink began to fade once more to the color of his flesh. "It's kind of liberating. And also, here, I can do *something* about my problems. Up there, I'm basically the weakest link, there is nothing I can do. But down here, however daunting my problems are, I can at least chip away at them to some degree. Earlier today, I helped bring Connie and Peridot back together. I have an idea where the gems might be thanks to you, and Pearl of all people might know if there is a way to reverse rejuvenation. But, the best part is this;" Steven pointed up to the night sky "Do you see that star? That's where Homeworld is. The Diamonds and all the problems that come with them are way up there"

Steven returned to the temple not to much later, unaware that he soon would learn that only part of that last sentence was true.

Chapter 12 Part 1

Steven, Connie, and Peridot were resting at the temple. Steven and Connie were fast asleep while Peridot paced with boredom. Her silent wish for something interesting was answered; as her machines started blaring with warnings. A ship was inbound. She roused the others while reading through the messages the machine was producing. The size of the ship was indicative that it wasn't the Diamonds themselves; but rather it seemed to be a smaller ship, likely a small battalion of Quartzes for retrieving Steven. She should have expected the Diamonds would send someone after Steven. Steven and Connie readied themselves for battle, and they left for the impending combat. Checking the scanner, it seemed to be coming right to their doorstep.

They left the house to see a green hand shaped ship coming in for decent. They let it land; they had no means to stop it. From the ship stepped out a single gem. Tall and muscular in form, Jasper stood before them.

"You" Jasper bellowed "I'm going to shatter you Rose!"

"And how do you think the Diamonds would feel about that?" Steven said "I know your loyalties lie with them."

"I am a gem of Yellow Diamond's court; but my Diamond is Pink before her. Be you anyone else, I would spare you as Yellow wishes; but you are the shatterer of Pink, and for that I will go against Yellow." Jasper summoned her helmet; Steven went pink and drew his shield. Jasper spin dashed to Steven, who caught we her hand, letting out a burst of force strong enough to crack the land. Jasper began a flurry of blows, Steven blocked the first few and then back-flipped out of the way. Jasper came in with a charge, but Steven kept up and flipped himself so he hung upside down in the air, before bubbling his fist and punching Jasper in the face, popping the bubble as he connected. Jasper recoiled from the powerful blow to the gem. Connie and Peridot could see Steven's muscles growing stronger and beefier, and his hair growing wilder. Jasper came in

with a kick, finally making contact. Steven was launched to the side, but was still standing strong. Jasper came in with a charging headbutt. Steven raised a hexagonal shield as if to block, but just before Jasper connected, he leaped over her, leaving the shield floating their, and kicked Jasper in the back of her head, slamming her into the shield. Jasper fell to the ground, but got back up quickly, wiping dirt from the edge of her mouth. Steven let out a smirk, as his eyes gleamed in an off-putting manner.

"Come on Rose; you shattered a Diamond but are struggling with a Quartz? Show me your real power. If I'm going to die in combat, I want to know I brought you to use your full power to do it!" Jasper added two blades to her helmet, and readied herself to kick things up a notch. Steven took to the air and changed Jasper while flying, hitting her with blow after blow and carrying her into the air. Jasper went for a punch, but by the time the blow reached were Steven had stood, he was behind her, and slammed her to the ground. As Jasper stood from the blow, she saw a geometric pink dome formed around her, spikes facing in. She tried to punch her way out, but the dome was unyielding. Steven flew down to the bubble and reached in, it opening around his arm. He grabbed Jasper's gem and crushed it, the shards falling between his fingers. As the dome dropped, Connie saw just what was so unsettling about his eyes; the pupils had lost their round shape, instead taking on that of a diamond.

As the last of the shards fell through his fingers, Steven growled through bared teeth "This was for everything you've done to me." As the stress of battle came to an end, Steven reverted to his normal look,his skin turning back to its regular tone, and his pupils returning to being round. Steven felt the remorse for what he had done welling up inside him, but what really hurt him more than his guilt was the look of fear and shame in Connie's eyes.

Chapter 12 part 2

Steven couldn't stand the fear and shame in Connie's eyes; he rushed into the bathroom to isolate himself. Connie, fearful yet, tenaciously ventured to try and talk to him, yet careful not to put herself out in the open. "Steven... you-"

Steven, in a rage, shifting between pink and normal, began advancing in hostile steps; rocking the foundation of the house. Connie step back with each advance of his."I what? Shattered her? I did it to protect you!" Steven's advance halted, his rage parting for a moment. "And I put you in danger... this is my fault..." the thunderous steps resumed, and Steven started breathing heavy. The pink state stabilized, as his body grew. "No! This is because of the Diamonds! They tortured me! Ripped me apart time and again to try and get back a gem long gone! Belittled me! Attacked me! Imprisoned me!" Steven's eyes; Diamond one more narrowed. Pink lightning crackled about his body. Peridot knew well enough to run for the hills. "Well not anymore!" Steven had grown to such a size that the wood groaned under his every step.

"Steven!"

"Yeah I'm a shatterer." Steven looked up to the roof, his gaze fixed beyond it. "**ARE YOU HAPPY NOW? IM A SHATTERER LIKE YOU! ISNT THAT WHAT YOU ALWAYS WANTED?**" The Pink lightning crackled audibly with every step.

"You don't have to be like them! You can be better!"

"My mom tried to be better but in the end she was the same!"

Thud. Crackle. Groan. Thud. Crackle. Groan.

"You aren't your mom either!"

Thud. Crackle. Groan. Thud. Crackle. Groan.

"Really! You keep telling me that, but look at me now!"

Thud. Crackle. Groan. Thud. Crackle. Groan.

Connie's back was to the wall. Steven's booming voice rang in her ears "Get out of my sight."

"Steven, please!"

" I said... **GET OUT OF MY SIGHT!**" The crackling lightning lashed out, charring the interior of the house. Painted onto the wall was Connie's sillohette, arms raised in a futile block, as her body fell limp upon the floor. A dangerous cocktail of remorse and hate, while angering Steven more, brought him out of the pink state, if only for a moment. Connie was breathing, but nothing more.

Peridot peeked around the door, having seen the pink glow go away. Steven saw her, and began shaking, his body swiftly morphing back to the way it was, fueled now not by hate but by guilt. "I wish I could go somewhere away from all this!" The door of the temple reacted to his whim, opening slowly. Steven rushed in, running from Peridot. He was terrified of her reaction when she saw what had happened. He slipped through the door, which shut behind him.

The land of darkened storm clouds was lashed by tornadoes and hurricanes, lightning of white and pink sprouting from beneath his feet and above his head. Dispute the raging storms, Steven felt safe here, away from Connie and Peridot and The Diamonds. The affects of adrenaline wearing of, Steven crashed to the ground and dozed off, a bed forming where he lay.

Chapter 13

Steven roused from his rest in the storm filled room, noticing the bed that had formed beneath him. He didn't recall any bed having been there before, but he figured the stress must have been messing with his memory. He began to trek about the stormy fields, seeing what he could find. To his surprise, the terrain seemed wholly barren, to bar the tornados whipping about. Having grown tired of the rain, he mumbled to himself "man, what I wouldn't give for a little sun. Suddenly before him, a small sun appeared. Connecting this with the bed having appeared before, he realized that his memory wasn't off but rather, the bed was created in response to him wanting one. Settling in, he called forth a beach, with a sun setting over the water; which appeared before him. Calling in the room once more, he summoned a lounge chair and sat back.

He relaxed in the chair for a while, the storm, having calmed some, fell gently upon his face. Growing lonely, he summoned forth a fake Connie with which to speak some. They talked for some time, lost in recollection. The storm parted as they talked of Steven's time on Earth. They spoke of spending time in the beach together, and of the party. For a time, the dark looming thoughts of what had been happening beyond the bounds of the room were pushed away. Bored of talking Steven asked the Connie what she wanted to do, to which they only said that they wanted to do what Steven wanted to do. "No, I don't what you to just do what I want to do" Steven began to explain "I want to do what you want to do right now"

"What I want? What I want? What I want?" The cloud copy queried, growing louder each time. Thunder cracked overhead, and the storm rolled back in. The brief and fleeting relief from what had happened beyond the walls of clouds came to a close. "I want to get away from you. I want to be safe."

Steven grew angry, turning pink as the lightning above grew more frequent. He changed the copy down, and cruches it with his shield, before reverting to normal and breaking down crying. "I

don't know what to do." he sobbed to himself. "I don't know how I'm supposed to live like this. With all this guilt. I just want someone to help me. I wish Pearl was here. I wish Ruby and Sapphire were here. I wish Amethyst were here." Motion caught his attention, he dried his tears for a moment to see better, and saw a large pink pole.

His sobbing slowed as he ventured to see what it was, as it certainly wasn't anything he wanted. Looking down, he saw a large room. Curiosity got the better of him, and he kept down. His floating didn't kick in, and he hit the ground hard. His legs folded over before straightening themselves out. He sat for a moment sobbing, in equal parts the guilt he already felt, and the pain from his legs. Gathering his strength through sobs, he looked about, seeing gems in an assortment of different colored bubbles. He dried his tears once more and sniffled, his sobbing having mostly subsided. He saw numerous empty pink bubbles matching his. Testing something, he summoned a bubble and sent it off. It disappeared for a moment before appearing among the others. He tried again to ensure it was consistent, which it was. A glimmer of hope was showing; if his empty bubbles are here, then the gems should be here to. He searched about, and found them, popping the bubbles. Tears, not of guilt or pain, but of joy, welled in his eyes as he saw his friends reform. Ruby and Sapphire fused, forming Garnet, and the four of them all embraced in a hug. Garnet, however, seemed to be plagued by darker thoughts.

"Let's get out of here, we've got our work cut out. My future visions obstructed, to many variables, but from what I've seen, this is one of the worst timelines where there is still hope for us. So, let's hop to it." Garnet began open the door, while Pearl went to catch up with Steven.

"So, how's Bismuth?" Steven turned pink, but Pearl was looking at the door, not at him. "I hope she didn't give you a hard time; I didn't have a chance to tell her about your mom. You know what, you've probably been through a lot, I'll ask her, where is she?" Pearl turned to face Steven, and seeing that he was pink, she recoiled slightly. At this, Steven's eyes flashed, but Garnet placed a hand on Steven's shoulder. He took a deep breath, and answered.

"She's in a bubble floating in the kitchen."

"What!"

"She pulled out my gem, my gem put pink's aura to her."

"Well that's... unfortunate. How'd the human take it?" At this, Garnet reaches over and bubbles Pearl's head.

"Stop talking. Your making things worse." Garnet then released the bubble, and Pearl was quiet. Steven calmed down and returned to his normal color.

Stepping outside, there was nary a moment before Steven was pink once more, as he came out of the temple to the sight of Peridot looking at Connie. Much to his relief, she began to stir.

"Connie!" Steven called out.

Connie looked about before looking at Steven. "Are you talking to me? Pardon me; I don't seem to recall what my name is. And while I'm at it, who are you? Who are any of you?"

Chapter 14

Steven see the blankness of Connie's expression. This wasn't some sick joke, she truly didn't remember him. Yet he didn't want to believe it so. "It's me, Steven. You really don't remember me?"

"Nope. So I'm Connie, and your Steven. Ok then." Connie gave a short nod.

"She seems to be suffering from retrograde amnesia" Peridot began to explain. "But I don't know why; there is no physical trauma that seems to be the cause." Steven started glowing pink, and Peridot took note. "No..."

"Yes."

"How? There's no way she would rip out your gem?"

"Apparently, she doesn't need to. Apparently if I get angry enough, my aura can come out."

"I thought you said you couldn't use your aura?"

"And I also couldn't heal, float, or enter the temple. This is my fault."

Garnet placed a hand on his shoulder. "Steven; you made it out of having been rejuvenated, think back to how you overcame it?"

"Well... I remembered how I had grown over the years." Steven paused in thought "So I just need to remind Connie how she has grown. But who would know that? Peridot? Any ideas?"

"I didn't know her for most of her life. You would need to talk to Bismuth or Lapis. But Bismuth's been rejuvenated and Lapis fled the planet." Peridot had started to grow aggressive, but when Steven flicked his eyes to her, she was timid once more.

Garnet spoke up again. "Bismuth will likely be... difficult. My future

vision is imprecise, but I see no possibility of restoring Bismuth not being an ordeal. This will be easiest if we get Lapis. And the most likely person to convince Lapis is Steven."

"What? Not Peridot or one of you?"

"No." Garnet answered "but if I tell you why this will be a lot harder. Just be sincere."

Ok well, who knows where she is. Maybe if I could get to a proper computer I could find her, but the only place I can think of that would have one is Pink Diamond's Observatory."

"Or the lunar sea spire." Peridot chimed in.

"What? The records indicate that it should have crumbled 4 years ago, since the reported theft of the Moon Goddess Statue."

"Bismuth and Lapis managed to restore it. It does have a crystal shrimp infestation however."

"Easy enough to deal with. I can only hope the computer there is enough. Let's bounce."

Garnet vetoed this plan "Peridot stays." Peridot had objections, but she held her tongue.

They warped off to the Spire. Luckily, the magic of the Goddess Statue kept the place intact, else the lapping of the waves would have eroded the warp pad away. They climbed around a third of the way without much event. Garnet asked a few questions about Steven's time on Earth, careful to avoid sensitive topics. It was evident Pearl and Amethyst wanted to join, but they both had the wisdom to leave it to Garnet, seeing as how she reacted to Pearls questions to Steven earlier. When they reached the crystal Shrimp, Steven simply bubbled them all and they kept moving. Eventually they reached the top. Steven tapped away at the computer, years of nothing but reading records and operating his computer left him quite efficient. He swiftly set up the radar to search for gem magic, only for errors to flash warning of a damaged communication hub. They left to assess, and hopefully fix, the damaged hub.

Arriving at the hub, and seeing it to be in decent condition, Garnet and Steven began hoisting beans into place; Amethyst and Pearl soon fusing to lend a hand as Opal. Only the last pillar had yet to be placed; Garnet was standing about as Steven stopped Opal. "Wait. I've read about these. If we put that pillar in as is, it'll make a trackable signal. If we were to make a round incision, it would dampen the range, but if it isn't perfectly round, we run the risk of it breaking the energy flow and blowing up."

Opal set down the beam and unfused. Pearl was first to speak. "How exactly will we make a perfectly round incision?"

After a moment of thought, Steven and Amethyst looked at each other. "I've got an idea. Shall we Amethyst?" Amethyst just smiled and offered her hand. In a puff of smoke, one stood where two once had.

"Well I'm not sure how fusing is gonna help."

"Well I may be an abomination against all gemkind on 2 counts, but trust me; I can do this." Smokey summoned their yo-yo and tossed it about the pillar and pulled tight. Upon dissipating the weapon, a perfectly round groove was left.

The two unfused, and Amethyst shuffled slowly away from Steven. "That's... a lot you're dealing with bud. If you need to talk, I'll be right over here."

Garnet placed the last pillar in, and it worked wonderfully. Returning to the Spire, Steven was able to use the radar and trace down Lapis as being on the dark side of the moon. "Looks like we know where we're going next."

Chapter 15

The Crystal Gems returned to the temple, as Steven prepared to head to the moon. Peridot was tending to Connie, retracting her basic human information while making sure she didn't injure herself on any household products. Steven formed a bubble around his head and climbed into the ship. Amethyst went to climb in after him, but Garnet stopped her. "This needs to be something Steven does alone. Now Steven; you got this, just make sure to stay calm."

With a small wave, Steven took off. Getting to the moon was a simple matter, but Steven didn't need future vision to know talking to Lapis would not be.

"Lapis..." Steven called out, a hesitation in his voice. He didn't want to see the fear and anger in another person's eyes, but he had no other choice. He wandered about, looking for her. It was a long while of identical landscapes before Lapis made herself known with a mighty blast of water. Steven raised his shield, although the blast still pushed him back.

"Get out. I came here to avoid you and the destruction you herald. I've been caught up in war, I don't want to be caught up in anything else."

"Lapis I'm sorry."

Lapis picked Steven up in a ball of water and tossed him aside. Steven used his floating to mitigate the fall. "Sorry doesn't fix what you did to Bismuth, and it won't save we from the destruction that follows you."

"Your right Lapis" She was taken aback by these words. "Saying I'm sorry doesn't fix what I've done, and it doesn't even mean it won't happen again. What it does mean, is that I'm trying to fix things."

"A little late don't you think? You couldn't have tried to fix

things before what you did to Bismuth."

"Yes, I should have tried harder to fix everything, but that's in the past. I'm trying to move past my past, and fix my mistakes; but what matters isn't my mistakes or anyone else's. What matters now is the present, and what I can do to try and fix things."

Lapis scoffed. Flowery words, yet no action to back it up. I'm thousands of years old, I know the way the world works. Maybe you aren't one of the Diamonds, but you were raised by them, molded by them. Lies and deceit hidden by a silver tinge is part of your nature. Whatever you are trying to do, I want no part of it." Lapis began to soar; Steven growled and took off in chase, shifting pink. Lapis tried to chase him off, but her skill in the air was no match for Steven's speed and reactions.

"LAPIS!" Steven shouted, before calming himself, and returning to normal, although staying in the air. "I've done something terrible and I'm trying to fix it, but I can't do that alone."

Lapis heard the determination and conviction mixed with the anger all present in his voice. "Perhaps you do mean to fix things." Lapis landed, and Steven followed. "Tell me what has happened to provoke you to such a change."

"I lost control of my powers and well... Connie took the hit. She got rejuvenated." He saw Lapis was about to take off, but he grabbed her wrist. "Wait, please. I'm not asking you to forgive me, I'm not asking you to come back, but you are Connie's only hope; I need you to tell me how she has grown and changed as a person. Don't do this for me; do this for Connie."

Lapis pulled her wrist away. "Alright, I'll tell you what you want to know, although I doubt it's what you're looking for. I have one condition though. If I tell you this, I want you to never speak to me again unless you have fixed everything you have done."

"I swear on my gem."

"Well that gem isn't a very trustworthy gem" Lapis took a deep breath. "But just this once I'll take your word. Connie never was one

to change much; maybe it's because she spent so much time with Me and Bismuth, or maybe she just didn't have enough time with other humans, but either way, I only ever noticed her change once. You were the first and only person she ever gave a second chance. I'm sorry I don't have anything else to offer. Sorry to Connie that is; not so much to you." Lapis took off, and Steven gave no chase.

Steven headed back to the ship, pondering directions he could take this information. If Steven was the first person she had ever given a second chance, then maybe she changed to be more compassionate? Of course, it could just be at face value, and she learned to be forgiving. Steven didn't know. He returned the ship to Earth and disembarked at the temple, sharing his findings with Garnet Amethyst and Pearl. "I just don't know what it could be. Garnet, you can see the future, what do I need her to remember?"

"A person is a very complicated thing Steven, and there are too many different paths for me to see anything clearly. What I can see for sure is that there is the possibility you bring her back, so don't give up."

"Yeah Steven, it's not like we only have one chance." Amethyst added. Garnet began shuffling back.

"It's not that simple! This is my fault, I did this, so it's my responsibility to fix it. But all I have to go by is that she gave me a second chance I never earned!" Steven turned pink and had begun growing, but rather than lash out, he shrunk back down and began sobbing. "I don't know how I can handle this. It's just too much." Garnet looked with a surprised contemplation; this was far better than the future she had expected.

Pearl knelt down to console him. "Steven... just because you got yourself into this mess doesn't mean you have to get yourself out without help. I've seen many human lifetimes, and the best of them, they all had one thing in common; they knew when to ask for help. I regret that wasn't a lesson I could teach you when you were younger, but if you'd let us" Pearl looked to Garnet and Amethyst, "I'd like to teach it you now" She reached out her hand to help Steven up; he dried his tears and took her hand, standing up tall and ready to fix this; with their help.